

REMARKS

Claims 25-40 are pending in the application. Claims 25-40 stand rejected. Claims 25 and 33 are hereby amended and claims 26, 28, 30-32, 34, 36, and 38-40 canceled. Applicant respectfully requests consideration of the following remarks and allowance of the claims.

Claim Rejections Based Upon 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 25-31 and 33-39 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider his rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112 in view of the citations provided below. The following citations indicate where the specification supports the claims. However, support for the claims is not limited to only the citations provided.

The specification at page 14, line 5 to page 16, line 27 provides support for the claims. In addition, the specification at page 35, line 3 to page 37, line 2 supports the claims.

Claim Rejections Based Upon 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

Claims 25-40 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,749,075 (Toader et al.). Toader does not anticipate claims 25, 27, 29, 33, 35, and 37 for the following reasons.

Independent claim 25 recites transferring the prepaid account code to a foreign database system of the second access provider if the prepaid account code is not associated with the first access provider, in the foreign database system, processing the prepaid account code to determine if the prepaid account code is associated with the second access provider, and providing internet access to the network device through the access server of the first access provider if the prepaid account code is associated with the second access provider. Toader does not disclose providing internet access through an access server of a first access provider if a prepaid account code is associated with a second access provider.

Applicant acknowledges that Toader presents a prepaid Internet access system wherein a user gains access to the Internet using a prepaid account code (Toader, col. 5, lines 30-35: "the PIN number can be used either for computer access...."). However, Toader does not disclose the PIN as associated with a second access provider as required by claim 25. In fact, Toader teaches a system similar to the prior art described in the specification. The specification describes prior art

systems as including access providers authenticating users using their own databases (Specification, page 35, line 4). Similarly, Toader discloses an access provider that authenticates users using its own database system. Specifically, Toader first gathers biographical information from a user when the user first dials an enhanced entry server (EES) in response to a commercial offer such as a rebate offer (Toader, col. 5 lines 39-55). The EES stores the user's information in association with a PIN. Later, the user installs Internet access software on a computer. The software directs the computer to connect to the EES. The EES provides Internet access to the user through the connection to the user's computer after validating the user and the PIN. Thus, Toader discloses a single database system (the EES) that authenticates users for a single access provider (the entity that operates the EES).

Advantageously, claim 25 allows multiple access providers to enter into sharing agreements with other access providers. Internet users are provided greater mobility and availability as a result of these sharing agreements (Specification, page 35, lines 8-13).

Independent claim 33 contains similar limitations as claim 25 and is therefore allowable over the art of record. Dependent claims 27, 29, 35, and 37 contain limitations that render them separately allowable over the prior art. However, a discussion is unnecessary because the dependent claims depend from allowable independent claims.

CONCLUSION

The claims in their present form are allowable over the art of record. Applicant therefore solicits their allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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